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# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NUMBER ELEVEN (2010)

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### THE VIRGINIA PRISONER AND JUVENILE OFFENDER RE-ENTRY COUNCIL

#### **Importance of Issue**

Section 2.2-221.1 of the *Code of Virginia* directs the Secretary of Public Safety to establish an integrated system for coordinating the planning and provision of offender transitional and reentry services among state, local, and non-profit agencies in order to prepare offenders for successful transition into their communities upon release from incarceration. This code section also requires the Secretary to ensure that a system is in place for improving opportunities for treatment, employment and housing while individuals are on subsequent probation, parole or post-release supervision.

Each year, approximately 13,500 adult and 500 juvenile offenders are projected to be released from incarceration. The Commonwealth of Virginia seeks to improve public safety by fostering a successful transition of these offenders into their communities; and by reducing the rates at which they returned to prison. In order to reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and reduce the number of crime victims, consistent with Virginia Code § 53.1-32.2, we must ensure that offenders released from incarceration have been adequately prepared to return to their communities. This preparation includes equipping offenders to find employment; providing educational opportunities; ensuring treatment for mental health and substance abuse issues; and assisting offenders re-integrate into a stable home environment. Successful integration of offenders requires collaboration, coordination, and partnership among state and local agencies, community supervision agencies, service providers, faith-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, courts, communities, and family members. Accordingly, I am taking the following measures:

### **Amending and Renaming the Virginia Prisoner Re-entry Policy Academy**

By virtue of authority vested in me as Governor under Article V, Section 1 of the Constitution of Virginia, and Sections 2.2-103 and 2.2-104 of the *Code of Virginia*, I hereby direct the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety to amend and alter the Virginia Prisoner Re-entry Policy Academy, originally established pursuant to Executive Order 97(October 2009) which is set to expire December 31, 2010. The Virginia Prisoner Re-entry Policy Academy shall be renamed the **Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-entry Council** with the aim of promoting re-entry strategies for adult and juvenile offenders.

The Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-entry Council (the Council) shall be chaired by the Secretary of Public Safety or her designee and comprised of the following Executive Branch representatives or their designees:

- Secretary of Commerce and Trade
- Secretary of Education
- Secretary of Health and Human Resources
- Secretary of Transportation
- Senior Economic Advisor to the Governor
- Commonwealth's Attorneys' Services Council
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Correctional Education
- Department of Criminal Justice Services
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Department of Medical Assistance Services
- Department of Planning and Budget
- Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation
- Department of Rehabilitative Services
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Veterans Services
- Virginia Employment Commission
- Virginia Indigent Defense Commission
- Virginia Parole Board

The Governor may appoint additional members as he deems appropriate. The Secretary of Public Safety shall invite additional participation by the Attorney General of Virginia, General Assembly, Supreme Court, Virginia Sheriffs Association, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, faith-based organizations, and Community Advocacy

Groups. All Executive Branch agencies of the Commonwealth shall participate in activities of the Council upon request. Support staff will be provided by the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety, Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Office of the Secretary of Education, and other agencies as the Secretary of Public Safety may designate.

The Council shall have the following functions:

1. Identify barriers that exist in each member's department or agency that may impede successful transition of offenders returning to their communities; and develop and implement procedures to overcome such barriers, to include job training, education, housing, and substance abuse treatment.
2. Improve collaboration and coordination of transitional services, including providing cross-training; sharing information among state agencies; and developing policies, procedures, and programs with well-defined, performance-based outcomes that enhance re-entry management.
3. Establish partnerships between community colleges and the business sector to promote employment and transitional jobs for released offenders.
4. Engage local agencies, community-based social service providers, community organizations, faith-based organizations, as well as other stakeholders, in promoting successful re-entry policies and programs.
5. Submit a status report of actions taken to improve offender transitional and re-entry services to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees no later than December 15 of each year.
6. Meet at the call of the Secretary of Public Safety or her designee and as provided in procedures adopted by the Council.

The Prisoner Re-entry Coordinator, in working with the Council, shall develop a long-term strategic plan for achieving the goal of reducing offender recidivism for those released from incarceration. The plan shall set out comprehensive strategies to be employed while offenders are incarcerated and to continue following their release. It shall have measurable objectives and establish specific outcome performance measures. The plan shall identify methods of improving communication, sharing of information, and collaborating between state and local agencies. Such a plan shall be submitted to the Governor for approval no later than December 31, 2010, and shall be updated by December 31 of each succeeding year.

The Council shall establish work groups and subcommittees to implement the provisions of the strategic plan and other re-entry reforms of the Commonwealth to assist offenders with jobs, housing, substance abuse treatment, medical care, and mental health services, with specific inclusion of women, juveniles, and veterans. Additionally, the Governor's Re-entry Council and the appropriate work group shall work collaboratively with the Juvenile Re-entry Advisory Group established by the Virginia Commission on Youth on improving the success and safety of juveniles returning to their community.

**Effective Date of the Executive Order**

This Executive Order shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this  
\_\_\_\_ th day of May 2010.

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Robert F. McDonnell, Governor

Attest:

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Secretary of the Commonwealth